

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604



MEMORANDUM

DATE:

October 13, 2000

SUBJECT:

Call from Concerned Citizen about Health Issues Possibly Associated with

Himco Dump, National Incident Response Case # 544991

FROM:

TO: Site File

On October 11, 2000, I received a voice mail message from Mr.

_ about health concerns for his household. His voice mail message stated that he believe he had contamination problems in the soil or water due to a landfill that was there before the neighborhood was built. He stated that he lived on the north side of Elkhart near the airport, Parkmore Plaza, and Bristol Street. He also stated that he knew about the five residents who had their water tested and contamination was found in their water.

I returned the telephone call on the same above date and spoke with a Ms. Mr. Ralph Johns was not available, when I told her I was calling from the US EPA she wanted to speak with me in his absence.

Ms. has concerns regarding the health for herself and the inhabitants of her household, ..., Elkhart, IN 46514. She stated that her daughter uses a wheelchair and is constantly exposing her hands to the soils in the backyard from rolling her wheelchair in the backyard. She spoke about when it rains debris and trash floats in their backyard. During this telephone call she did not give me the impression that her concerns were associated with the Himco Dump, because her resident is far northeast of Himco Dump. I gave her the 800 telephone number to the National Response Center. I asked her to call the number and explain to them the same concerns she had just explained to me. I also told her that I would call her back on Thurs., October 12, 2000.

On Thurs. October 12, 2000, I returned the telephone call to Ms. I asked if she had the chance to speak with the National Response Center. Her response was no, that she had spent most of her time in the emergency room complaining of a non specific illness. She continued to tell me about all the things she felt was wrong with her dwelling. She spoke about having five different types of mold infestation in her home, she spoke about her 11yr old daughter having spinal bifida, she spoke about have some type of parasitic infestation coming from underneath her house. She spoke about having dogs and a lamb dying, having a dog which had cancer of the foot.

I told Ms. I would put her on hold and call the National Response Center now, while I was on the telephone with her (3-way conversation). I call the response center, identified myself as an RPM with the US EPA R5, who had a concerned citizen on the line who wanted to submit a report. Ms. began to repeat some of the concerns she had stated to me, but this time she spoke about a landfill and a pond and she named Bayer as the company who allegedly dumped barrels in the pond. At this point, I told the responder from the National Response Center that she was speaking about a Superfund Site in which I was the Remedial Project Manager. I also informed the responder that the information about the company and the barrels had not been disclosed previously. I told the responder that I had no idea that she was connecting her concerns with the Himco Dump, because of the description she had given about where her backyard was located which was far northeast but parallel to the pond associated with Himco Dump. I told the National Response Center responder if I had known the information about the association with the Himco Dump I would have tried to handle the call on a local level. The responder completed collecting the information from Ms. Gaiera and assigned case # 544991 and stated she would forward the information collected to the Center for Disease Control. The National Response Center responder hung-up the telephone, but I continued to speak with Ms. Gair ra.

Ms begin to speak about her 13yr, old daughter having asthma problems and the entire neighborhood children having asthma. I could have someone in the background telling her what to say. I continued to listen to Ms. as she spoke about not sleeping in her home but having to sleep in a hotel because of the concern for her health. She spoke about the family being diagnosed with having scabies, and her responsibility for having to irrigate her daughter's intestines with sterile water. She spoke about her concerned for her daughter's depressed immune system and how her daughter keeps getting E-coli infections. She stated that the doctors she visited did not give her any satisfaction. She spoke about getting some satisfaction from visiting a herbal medicine specialist. I asked her where did she get my telephone number from and she told me the she had spoke with a John at the Elkhart Health Dept., who told her there was nothing they could do and that she should call me. I asked her if she had visited the Elkhart Health Department doctors and given the doctors at the Elkhart Health Department the same information, especially since she stated several times that she could not afford to keep going to the doctor's office and that she could not afford to keep living in a hotel while she had to constantly fumigate her house because of the parasitic infestation. Her response was that she was not aware of the Elkhart County Health Department. I told her to look in the Elkhart County telephone book for the health department to locate the address and give them a visit and bring with her the bag of parasites she had collected. I told her I would make a couple of telephone calls to see if someone locally would address her concerns. I also stated that someone would definitely get in touch with her from the National Response Center, I tried to 3-way this conversation with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Project Manager but she was away from her desk. I ended my conversation with Ms. and preceded to contact the IDEM project manager for the Himco Dump Site.

I spoke with the IDEM project manager and informed her about the incident, and she stated she would speak with her supervisor who at some point in the past was employed with Elkhart Co. Health Dent., and that she would get back with me. I told her about the conversation Ms stated she had with a John at the Elkhart Health Department, and we both agreed that, Ms. s conversation about the Elkhart Health Department spokesperson did not sound completely accurate. The IDEM project manager returned my

call and stated that based on the conversation with her supervisor it sounded like Ms.

complaints could be potentially related to the septic system. She stated that one of us should contact the Elkhart Co. Health Dept. and inquire about getting the County Health Dept. to do a sanitation inspection to the residents septic system.

I called the Elkhart County Hea'th Dept. and spoke with the representative who stated that he had spoken with Ms. (He told me that he told Ms. he could not do anything about the mold, and had given her my telephone number about her other concerns. By this time it is late in the day, I told the representative that I would get back in contact with him on Friday, October 13, and we would finish our conversation. I did however, inform the Elkhart Co. Health Department representative about the recommendation IDEM had made, and we ended our conversation.

On today, Friday, October 13, I received a forwarded voice mail message from an US EPA on-scene co-ordinator concerning the National Response Center response to this incident Case #544991, she stated that a copy of the report was available and to whom I needed to contact to get a copy of the report. The forwarded message was from an IDEM emergency response person who had given the report information to the Elkhart local responder with a contact telephone number. The IDEM emergency responder told the on-scene co-ordinator that the local health department was aware of the issue and that the local health department and the local emergency responder and potentially the remedial project manager would speak with each other about incident report # 544991.

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Incident Report # 544991

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION

*Report taken by: CIV REDDY at 15:35 on 12-0CT-00

Incident Type: FIXED
Incident Cause: UNKNOWN
Affected Area: UN-NAMED POND

The incident occurred on 12-0CT-95 at 08:00 local time.

Affected Medium: WATER

REPORTING PARTY

Name:

Address:

PRIMARY Phone:

SUSPECTED RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Name:

UNKNOWN

XX

Type of Organization: UNKNOWN

INCIDENT LOCATION

27683 PLAINSFIELD DR.

County: ELKHART

ELKHART, IN 46514

RELEASED MATERIAL(S)

CHRIS Code: UNK

Official Material Name: UNKNOWN MATERIAL

Also Known As:

Qty Released: 0 UNKNOWN AMOUNT

Qty in Water: 0 UNKNOWN AMOUNT

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

CALLER STATES EVERYONE IN THE HOME IS SICK DUE TO UNKNOWN CAUES

INCIDENT DETAILS

Building ID:

Type of Fixed Object:

Power Generating Facility:

Generating Capacity:

Type of Fuel:

NPDES:

NPDES Compliance:

---WATER INFORMATION---

Body of Water: UN-NAMED POND

Tributary of:

Nearest River Mile Marker:

Water Supply Contaminated: UNKNOWN

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DAMAGES

Fire Involved: NO

Hospitalized:

Fire Extinguished: UNKNOWN

Passenger:

INJURIES:

Emp1/Crew:

FATALITIES:

Empl/Crew:

Passenger:

Occupant:

EVACUATIONS:

Who Evacuated:

Radius/Area:

Damages:

Hours

Direction of

Closure Type Description of Closure

Closed

Closure

Air:

Road:

Artery:N

Major

Waterway: N

Track:

Media Interest: NONE Community Impact due to Material: NO

REMEDIAL ACTIONS

CALLER WANT HER WATER TESTED FOR E COLI / INCIDENT IS ONGOING

Release Secured: UNKNOWN

Release Rate:

Estimated Release Duration:

WEATHER

ADDITIONAL AGENCIES NOTIFIED

Federal:

State/Local:

State/Local On Scene: State Agency Number:

NOTIFICATIONS BY NRC

U.S. EPA V

(312) 3532318

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENC

(202) 8986100

NIPC WATCH & WARNING UNIT

(202) 3233204

NOAA 1ST CLASS BB RPTS FOR IN

12-OCT-00 15:54

(206) 5266344

IN DEPT ENV MNGMT ATTN: BEAUCHAMP

12-OCT-00 15:54

(317) 2337745

MICHIGAN DEQ

ATTN: THOR STRONG

12-OCT-00 15:54

(517) 3350430

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CALLER STATES UNKNOWN CHEMICAL CO. DUMPED UNKNOWN CHEMICALS INTO UN-NAMED POND / 2 DOGS DIED/ 2 OTHER DOGS AND A LAMB ARE SICK /CALLER STATES THIRE IS 3 DIFFERENT KINDS OF MOLD INSIDE THE HOME FROM UNKNOWN SOURCES

*** END INCIDENT REPORT 544991 ***

Report any problems or Fax number changes by calling 1-800-424-8802 PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT http://www.nrc.uscq.mil

P/wal)